Remarks/Arguments

In an Office Action dated February 7, 2006 claims 1, 2, 4-15 and 17-24 were rejected under § 102 and claims 3 and 16 were rejected under § 103. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the remarks below.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 15 and 18

Claims 1, 2, 4-15 and 17-24 were rejected under § 102 over Berman. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Independent claims 1, 15 and 18 all relate to restricting communications between devices that would otherwise be able to communicate. Applicants submit that Berman does not teach or suggest such operations. Berman is designed to allow private devices on separate Fibre Channel loops to communicate in the first place. Berman does not then restrict such communication that it has allowed

It is believed that a quick background on Fibre Channel loop and private device operation is helpful. In basic operation devices connected in a Fibre Channel loop can only communicate with other devices on the same loop. Techniques were developed to overcome this limitation. One technique is disclosed in U. S. Patent No. 6,401,128, referenced in an accompanying Information Disclosure Statement. Berman discloses another technique by simply allowing several physically independent loops to be operated as a single logical loop.

Private addressing uses only the AL_PA or lower 8 bits of the 24 bit Fibre Channel address. Private devices, absent other techniques such as those disclosed on Patent 6,401,128 mentioned above, can only communicate with private devices, Berman noting that the communication is limited to the local loop. Berman does not change this basic operation. Berman merely allows private devices on separate physical loops to communicate by being on one logical loop.

Addressing then the Office Action and its rejection based on Berman, the Office Action cites paragraph 8, last 3 lines; paragraph 24, lines 1-3 and paragraph 156 as teaching the restriction of communications between the devices. The paragraph 8 citation just indicates that private devices can only communicate on the local loop. The paragraph 24 citation just indicates that Berman allows several separate physical loops to be combined into one logical loop. Paragraph 156 describes the filtering performed in a port to allow communications to exit the local physical loop for delivery to a different physical loop. Paragraphs 156 to 163 describe the technique for determining how a particular frame from a device on the local physical loop is analyzed for circulation within the local loop if addressed to a device on that loop or provided to another loop if the device is not on the local physical loop. Thus paragraphs 156-163 describe the filtering needed to allow the devices to communicate in the first instance.

As mentioned above, the capability for the devices to otherwise communicate is present in each of the independent claims. However, the claims require more, namely then restricting communications of these devices that could otherwise communicate. Berman does not teach or suggest this further requirement of the present claims. Berman does not teach or suggest any technique to then restrict communications which it has gone to great effort to even allow. In fact, it is submitted that the restriction requirement is the opposite of Berman's goal of allowing communications between the devices.

Even if Berman were modified in hindsight to restrict communications between devices, it would only do it by not allowing the devices to communicate at all, thus not meeting that claim requirement.

Therefore Applicants submit that Berman does not anticipate claims 1, 15 and 18 but either is missing an element or actually teaches away when all of the claim limitations are fully considered.

Claims 4 and 19

Claims 4 and 19 were rejected based on the statement that members with private communication have restricted communications. Applicants respectfully traverse this

rejection. As stated above, one requirement of the claims is that the devices would otherwise be able to communicate. The restrictions on private communication apparently referenced in the Office Action would disallow the communication from the beginning, so that the inherent limitations of private communication do not teach or suggest the type-based restriction of claims 4 and 19.

Claims 11 – 14 and 23

Claims 11-14 and 23 were rejected over Berman Fig. 25 and paragraphs 154, 156 and 161-162. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Fig. 25 is just a block diagram of a bridging hub according to Berman. Paragraphs 156-163 just describe the filtering algorithm, as discussed above, which allows different physical loops to form a logical loop. They mention nothing about operation when another device is added to the fabric as required on claims 11 and 12. They clearly mention, teach or suggest nothing about operations when two fabrics are merged as required in claims 13, 14 and 23.

Conclusion

Based on the above remarks Applicants respectfully submit that all of the present claims are allowable. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

/Keith Lutsch/

May 8, 2006

Keith Lutsch, Reg. No. 31,851
Wong, Cabello, Lutsch,
Rutherford & Brucculeri, L.L.P.

Filed Electronically

20333 SH 249, Suite 600
Houston, TX 77070
832-446-2405